

**Test Specifications**  
**NJ ASK**  
**Language Arts Literacy Grades 5, 6, and 7**

The language arts literacy component of New Jersey's Grades 5, 6, and 7 assessments is an integrated unit through which students draw upon their writing and reading experiences to think, to learn, to communicate, and to create original work. As with most instructional materials that are familiar to students, the language arts assessments provide a variety of texts, illustrations, and activities that are intended to engage and sustain student interest in the content and sequence of assessment topics and tasks.

**Content Clusters**

The fifth-grade New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge Language Art Literacy test assesses skills in the following content clusters:

- Reading
  - Working with or interpreting text
  - Analyzing/critiquing text
- Writing
  - Generating Text

**Assessment Sequence**

<b>NJ ASK Grade 5 Assessment Sequence</b>	<b>NJ ASK Grades 6 and 7 Assessment Sequence</b>
1. Writing: speculate (picture prompt) 2. Reading: narrative 3. Reading: everyday text	1. Writing: speculate (persuasive prompt) 2. Reading: narrative 3. Reading: everyday text

The variety and sequence is designed to engage students' interest and elicit clear demonstrations of what students know and are able to do. In each of the three assessments, students will generate their own text and analyze text generated by others. The varied contexts contained in language arts literacy will enable students to demonstrate their knowledge of language use and will further develop their literacy experiences. Students will encounter performance-based tasks for writing, as well as multiple-choice and open-ended items for reading.

**Administration**

The 2006 NJ ASK Grades 5, 6, and 7 Language Arts Literacy Assessments are comprised of paper-and-pencil components to be administered over a two-day period. The first day will consist of two sections that will take approximately one and a half hours; and the second day will consist of one section that will take approximately forty-five minutes. Although the NJ ASK Grades 5, 6, 7 Language Art Literacy Assessment will be administered according to a designated schedule, school districts will be given leniency to ensure that the assessment is completed within the testing window.

**Demonstration of Abilities**

The questions and activities on all three assessments are designed to elicit students' demonstration of the Language Arts Literacy Core Curriculum Content Standards that were developed by a committee of teachers, teacher educators, supervisors, administrators, parents, and business representatives. They also are designed to measure students' demonstration of abilities for *Working with Text*, *Analyzing/Critiquing Text*, and *Generating Text*.

**Working with or Interpreting Text**

*Working with or Interpreting Text* refers to those activities in which students use strategies to interpret or reformulate meaning from the text. Questions and tasks with this focus will ask students to identify main ideas, supporting details, directions, paraphrasing, text organization, and purposes for reading.

**Analyzing and Critiquing Text**

*Analyzing and Critiquing Text* refers to those activities in which students use strategies to analyze and critique the text. Students will respond to questions that enhance their understanding, predict tentative meanings, and draw conclusions or form opinions about the text and the author's techniques. Questions and tasks that focus on this kind of analysis will ask students to identify or explain the fundamentals and the nuances contributed by textual conventions and literary elements.

**Generating Text**

*Generating Text* refers to those activities in which students use pictures or text already generated as a springboard for generating their own work and ideas. It is a self-contained component for which students will either view a picture prompt or read a short passage containing detailed information and use the information to make decisions, solve a problem, or write a story. This section of the assessment is constructed to enable students to shape their written response with what they have learned through prior experience.

**Scoring**

In all three assessments, students will encounter multiple-choice and open-ended items for reading. Most open-ended items will ask students to write a paragraph or more in response. For all three tests, students' responses to open-ended items will be scored using the *0- to 4-point Open-Ended Scoring Rubric* (or scoring scale) designed to measure students' levels of understanding. Each open-ended question has specific requirements that guide use of the rubric to score student responses.

**Writing Tasks** will be scored using holistic scoring rubrics developed specifically to assess students' performance in writing. *The fifth-grade writing sample will be scored on a 1 to 5 point scale using the New Jersey Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric, and the sixth and seventh grade writing samples will be scored on a 1 to 6 point scale using the New Jersey Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric, which is designed to assess essential features of good writing.*

**Scoring Rubrics for NJ ASK Language Arts Literacy, Grade 5, 6, and 7**

Reading	Open-Ended Scoring Rubric (4 points)
Writing	New Jersey Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric (5 points for Grade 5)
Writing	New Jersey Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric (6 points for Grades 6 and 7)

The following list shows the categories and clusters assessed in the Language Arts Literacy component of the NJ ASK, Grades 5, 6, and 7 for 2006.

**Working with Text**

Extrapolation of Information/Following Directions  
Paraphrasing / Vocabulary  
Recognition of a Purpose for Reading  
Recognition of Central Idea or Theme  
Recognition of Supporting Details  
Recognition of Text Organization

**Analyzing Text**

Making Judgments, Drawing Conclusions  
Forming Opinions  
Literary Elements and Textual Conventions  
Prediction of Tentative Meanings  
Questioning, Clarifying, Predicting

**Generating Text**

In the following table, the categories and clusters aligned to the items on the NJ ASK Grade 5 Language Arts Literacy Assessment are correlated with their alignments to the New Jersey Language Arts Literacy Core Curriculum Content Standards.

<b>Assessment Category and Cluster</b>	<b>Alignment to LAL CCCS</b>
<b>Working with Text</b>	
Extrapolation of Information/Following Directions	3.1.G.1, 3.1.G.3, 3.1.G.7, 3.1.G.9
Paraphrasing / Vocabulary	3.1.F.2, 3.1.G.3, 3.1.G.9
Recognition of a Purpose for Reading	3.1.G.1, 3.1.G.7, 3.1.G.11
Recognition of Central Idea or Theme	3.1.G.2, 3.1.G.7
Recognition of Supporting Details	3.1.G.1, 3.1.G.3, 3.1.G.8, 3.1.G.9
Recognition of Text Organization	3.1.G.3, 3.1.G.9, 3.1.G.10, 3.1.G.11
<b>Analyzing Text</b>	
Making Judgments, Drawing Conclusions	3.1.G.1, 3.1.G.3, 3.1.G.4, 3.1.G.9, 3.1.G.11, 3.1.G.12, 3.1.H.6
Forming Opinions	3.1.G.4, 3.1.G.5, 3.1.G.9, 3.1.G.12
Literary Elements and Textual Conventions	3.1.G.1, 3.1.G.11, 3.1.G.12, 3.1.G.13
Prediction of Tentative Meanings	3.1.G.9, 3.1.G.11, 3.1.G.13
Questioning, Clarifying, Predicting	3.1.G.1, 3.1.G.9
<b>Generating Text</b>	3.2.B.2

The following matrix demonstrates how the operational form for NJ ASK Grade 5 Language Arts Literacy was constructed.

Test Construction Map for Grade 5 Language Arts Literacy NJ ASK

<b>Text types/Strand</b>	<b>Reading Selections</b>	<b>MC (Number of Items)</b>	<b>OE (Number of Items)</b>	<b>WT (Number of Items)</b>	<b>Total Points</b>
Picture Prompt		0	0	1	5
Narrative	1				
AT		4-6	0-2	0	8-12
WT		4-6	0-2	0	8-12
Everyday Text	1				
AT		2-6	0-2	0	8-12
WT		4-8	0-2	0	8-12
<b>Total Items</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Total Points</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>41</b>

Actual Test Map for Grade 5 Language Arts Literacy NJ ASK

<b>Text types/Strand</b>	<b>Reading Selections</b>	<b>MC (Number of Items)</b>	<b>OE (Number of Items)</b>	<b>WT (Number of Items)</b>	<b>Total Points</b>
Picture Prompt		0	0	1	5
Narrative	1				
AT		6	1	0	10
WT		4	1	0	8
Everyday Text	1				
AT		2	2	0	10
WT		8	0	0	8
<b>Total Items</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Total Points</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>41</b>

The following set of sample items are provided to demonstrate the style and rigor students can expect to see on the NJ ASK Grade 5 Language Arts Literacy Assessment. One item per passage type and category will be represented. Each item also has its full alignment to the Core Curriculum Content Standards indicated.

## Grade 5

### Literary

**MC** (3.1.G.13) (AT: Prediction of Tentative Meanings)

“Joseph leaned against his new locker and crossed his arms over his chest, feeling very much like a fish out of water” means Joseph felt

- A. nervous.
- B. surprised.
- C. respectful.
- D. uncomfortable. \*

**OE** (3.1.G.4) (AT: Drawing Conclusions)

In this story, Kia does not agree with her mother’s decision to let the bird go free.

- Tell two reasons Kia’s mother gives for letting the bird go.
- Do you agree with Kia’s mother’s decision? Explain why or why not.

Use information from the story to support your response.

### Informational

**MC** (3.1.G.1) (WT: Extrapolation of Information/Following Directions)

Which of the following statements best describes the author’s attitude towards libraries?

- A. They are an important part of every community. \*
- B. They are being replaced by large bookstores.
- C. They are useful for young children.
- D. They are too crowded.

**OE** (3.1.G.9) (WT: Recognition of Supporting Details)

In the article the author compares watching a movie at home to watching a movie in a theater.

- Describe what it is like to watch a movie at home.
- Describe what it is like to watch a movie in a theater.
- Explain two things they have in common.



Use information from the article to support your response.

**Grade 5 Picture Writing Prompt  
(3.2.B.2) (GT)**



A picture can tell a story, but different people will see different stories in the same picture. Look at this picture. What story do you think it tells? Write what you think is happening in this picture. What is the story behind it?

The writing you do in your booklet will be scored. Look at the checklist. It shows what your writing must have to get the best score. Read the checklist to yourself and refer to it as often as necessary.

	<b>New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge 2006</b>
<b>Writer's Checklist</b>	
<b>Important Points to Remember as You Write</b>	
<b>CONTENT/ORGANIZATION</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Focus on your purpose for writing and your audience.	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Develop a clear topic or central idea.	
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Support your ideas with details, explanations, and examples.	
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Put your ideas in the order that best communicates what you are trying to say.	
<b>SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Use clear and varied sentences.	
<b>USAGE</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. Use words correctly.	
<input type="checkbox"/> 7. Use varied and vivid vocabulary.	
<b>MECHANICS</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> 8. Capitalize, spell, and punctuate correctly.	
<input type="checkbox"/> 9. Write neatly.	
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The following matrix demonstrates how the operational form for NJ ASK Grade 6 Language Arts Literacy was constructed.

Test Construction Map for Grade 6 Language Arts Literacy NJ ASK

<b>Text types/Strand</b>	<b>Reading Selections</b>	<b>MC (Number of Items)</b>	<b>OE (Number of Items)</b>	<b>WT (Number of Items)</b>	<b>Total Points</b>
Persuasive Prompt		0	0	1	6
Narrative	1				
AT		4-6	0-2	0	6-12
WT		4-6	0-2	0	6-12
Everyday Text	1				
AT		4-6	0-2	0	6-12
WT		4-6	0-2	0	6-12
<b>Total Items</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Total Points</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>42</b>

Actual Test Map for Grade 6 Language Arts Literacy NJ ASK

<b>Text types/Strand</b>	<b>Reading Selections</b>	<b>MC (Number of Items)</b>	<b>OE (Number of Items)</b>	<b>WT (Number of Items)</b>	<b>Total Points</b>
Persuasive Prompt		0	0	1	6
Narrative	1				
AT		5	1	0	9
WT		5	1	0	9
Everyday Text	1				
AT		4	2	0	12
WT		6	0	0	6
<b>Total Items</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Total Points</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>42</b>

The following set of sample items are provided to demonstrate the style and rigor students can expect to see on the NJ ASK Grade 6 Language Arts Literacy Assessment. One item per passage type and category will be represented. Each item also has its full alignment to the Core Curriculum Content Standards indicated.



## Grade 6

### Literary

**MC** (3.1.G.12) (AT: Forming of Opinions)

Which of the following best describes Mrs. Williams?

- A. fair and understanding \*
- B. friendly and relaxed
- C. impatient and strict
- D. harsh and biased

**OE** (3.1.G.9) (AT: Making Judgments, Drawing Conclusions)

Think about what would happen if Andre and Lee can't agree on whose game to play next time.

- Rather than getting angry with Andre, what could Lee do?
  - Why would this be a good solution to this problem?
  - How do you think Lee will act the next time Andre does not agree with him?
- Explain your answer.

Use information from the story to support your response.

### Informational

**MC** (3.1.F.2) (WT: Paraphrasing/Vocabulary)

In paragraph 3, the word **venture** means

- A. to travel a familiar route.
- B. to do something that is risky. \*
- C. to join a new group of people.
- D. to relax in a comfortable place.

**OE** (3.1.G. 4) (AT: Forming of Opinions)

Planning a new city was an overwhelming task. The city planners faced many challenges that made it difficult to plan the city. Consider all of the problems the planners faced.

- List three of the problems the planners faced.
- Tell which problem you think was the most challenging.
- Explain why you think this was the most challenging problem.

Use information from the article to support your response.

## Grade 6 Writing Prompt


(3.2.B.2) (GT)

As a result of complaints by some students that the school lunch break is too short, the student council has proposed a new schedule to the principal that would add 10 minutes to lunchtime. This proposal would also result in a later dismissal time at the end of the day.

The principal is asking students to write letters supporting or opposing this proposal. Think about the effect this would have on you and students in your school. What are the advantages? What are the disadvantages? What is your point of view?

Write a letter to the principal in which you support or oppose the decision to add 10 minutes to the school day to lengthen the lunch break. Use examples and other evidence to support your decision.

Look at the checklist. It shows what your writing must have to get the best score. Read the checklist to yourself and refer to it as often as necessary.



New Jersey  
Assessment  
of Skills and  
Knowledge 2006

### Writer's Checklist

Important Points to  
Remember as You Write

**CONTENT/ORGANIZATION**

- \_\_\_\_ 1. Focus on your purpose for writing and your audience.
- \_\_\_\_ 2. Develop a clear topic or central idea.
- \_\_\_\_ 3. Support your ideas with details, explanations, and examples.
- \_\_\_\_ 4. Put your ideas in the order that best communicates what you are trying to say.

**SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION**

- \_\_\_\_ 5. Use clear and varied sentences.


**USAGE**

- \_\_\_\_ 6. Use words correctly.
- \_\_\_\_ 7. Use varied and vivid vocabulary.

**MECHANICS**

- \_\_\_\_ 8. Capitalize, spell, and punctuate correctly.
- \_\_\_\_ 9. Write neatly.

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The following matrix demonstrates how the operational form for NJ ASK Grade 7 Language Arts Literacy was constructed.

Test Construction Map for Grade 7 Language Arts Literacy NJ ASK

<b>Text types/Strand</b>	<b>Reading Selections</b>	<b>MC (Number of Items)</b>	<b>OE (Number of Items)</b>	<b>WT (Number of Items)</b>	<b>Total Points</b>
Persuasive Prompt		0	0	1	6
Narrative	1				
AT		4-6	0-2	0	6-12
WT		4-6	0-2	0	6-12
Everyday Text	1				
AT		4-6	0-2	0	6-12
WT		4-6	0-2	0	6-12
<b>Total Items</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Total Points</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>42</b>

Actual Test Map for Grade 7 Language Arts Literacy NJ ASK

<b>Text types/Strand</b>	<b>Reading Selections</b>	<b>MC (Number of Items)</b>	<b>OE (Number of Items)</b>	<b>WT (Number of Items)</b>	<b>Total Points</b>
Persuasive Prompt		0	0	1	6
Narrative	1				
AT		5	1	0	9
WT		5	1	0	9
Everyday Text	1				
AT		4	2	0	12
WT		6	0	0	6
<b>Total Items</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Total Points</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>42</b>

The following set of sample items are provided to demonstrate the style and rigor students can expect to see on the NJ ASK Grade 7 Language Arts Literacy Assessment. One item per passage type and category will be represented. Each item also has its full alignment to the Core Curriculum Content Standards indicated.

## **Grade 7**

### **Literary**

**MC (3.1.G.7) (WT: Extrapolation of Information/Following directions)**

Why does Susan become excited about her science fair project?

- A. She wants to learn more about plants. \*
- B. She wants to impress her teacher.
- C. She wants to win a blue ribbon.
- D. She wants to be a scientist.

**OE (3.1.G.6) (AT: Making Judgments, Drawing Conclusions)**

In the story, Sean's mother says, "The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence." Think about what Sean's mother means by this.

- What is the "grass" in the story?
- What is the "fence" in the story?
- Why did this saying change what Sean decided to do?

Use information from the story to support your response.

### **Informational**

**MC (3.1.G.3) (WT: Recognition of Text Organization)**

In paragraph 7, the author makes his opinion clear by

- A. quoting experts.
- B. using examples. \*
- C. comparing ideas.
- D. asking questions.

**OE (3.1.G.1) (AT: Questioning, Clarifying, Predicting)**

Imagine you are a newspaper reporter covering this famous flight.

- What questions might you have asked each of the pilots?
- Why would these questions be important to ask?

Use information from the article to support your response.

## Grade 7 Writing Prompt



(3.2.B.4) (GT)

The school board is considering adopting a policy that would require students to maintain at least a B grade in all classes in order to participate in sports or other after-school clubs and activities. Some students support this decision; others oppose it.

The principal is preparing to report to the school board on the policy. The principal wants to hear students' opinions. Each student is asked to write an essay either supporting or opposing the proposal on requiring a certain grade to participate in extracurricular activities. Think about how you feel. What are the advantages of this policy? What are the disadvantages? Explain if you think this policy is fair or not. Do you think the policy should be adopted?

Write an essay explaining your position on the policy. Use examples and other evidence to support your position.

Look at the checklist. It shows what your writing must have to get the best score. Read the checklist to yourself and refer to it as often as necessary.

 <b>New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge 2006</b>
<b>Writer's Checklist</b> <b>Important Points to Remember as You Write</b>
<b>CONTENT/ORGANIZATION</b> ____ 1. Focus on your purpose for writing and your audience. ____ 2. Develop a clear topic or central idea. ____ 3. Support your ideas with details, explanations, and examples. ____ 4. Put your ideas in the order that best communicates what you are trying to say.
<b>SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION</b> ____ 5. Use clear and varied sentences.
<b>USAGE</b> ____ 6. Use words correctly. ____ 7. Use varied and vivid vocabulary.
<b>MECHANICS</b> ____ 8. Capitalize, spell, and punctuate correctly. ____ 9. Write neatly.
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